

## House Republican Press Release

March 7, 2006  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Representative Frey Introduces Bill To Fund Local Rail Upgrades**



HARTFORD—State Representative John H. Frey, R-Ridgefield, has introduced legislation to fund rail improvements to the Norwalk to Danbury line and the Cannondale Train Station in Wilton. House Bill 5397, An Act Concerning The Danbury To Norwalk Rail Line, would appropriate funds to the Department of

Transportation (DOT) to install a centralized traffic control (CTC) system on the Danbury to Norwalk commuter rail line by December 2006. When installed, the CTC would allow for safe operation of multiple trains on this rail line.

The Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) has long advocated similar rail improvements. According to HVCEO, the Danbury Branch Line is a 23.6 mile long single track rail line. As part of the Metro North commuter railroad, an arm of Greater New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority, it is part of the second largest commuter railroad in the nation. This rail line served stops as far north as Pittsfield, Massachusetts until 1971.

Governor M. Jodi Rell also proposed rail upgrades to Connecticut's rail service, including rehabilitation of 40 passenger coaches used on the branch lines, in her 2006-2007 budget proposal. Rep. Frey, who is the only local legislator serving on the Legislature's Transportation Bonding sub-committee, said his proposal, made in conjunction with State Reps. Antonietta Boucher, R-Wilton, and Lewis J. Wallace, D-Danbury, will help further illustrate the need for local rail upgrades.

“This legislation is designed to help ensure that the need for modernizing the Danbury to Norwalk line is recognized in any formal plan to improve the state transportation system,” said Rep. Frey, who also serves as an Assistant Minority Leader. “Rail service in the shoreline communities has seen the majority of funding for upgrades in recent years, while our local line has been largely neglected. Commuters who currently use the rail system, especially the Danbury line, deserve far more consistent service and an improved rail system for Western Connecticut would go a long way toward attracting additional riders and reducing traffic congestion on our highways.”

Meanwhile, House Bill 5399, An Act Authorizing Bonds Of The State For The Cannondale Train Station, would allocate up to \$250,000 to install water service and a restroom at the station. Rep. Frey added that making these upgrades to the station would

be welcomed by many commuters making the trip from New York City. The bills are now before the Legislature's Transportation Committee for consideration.